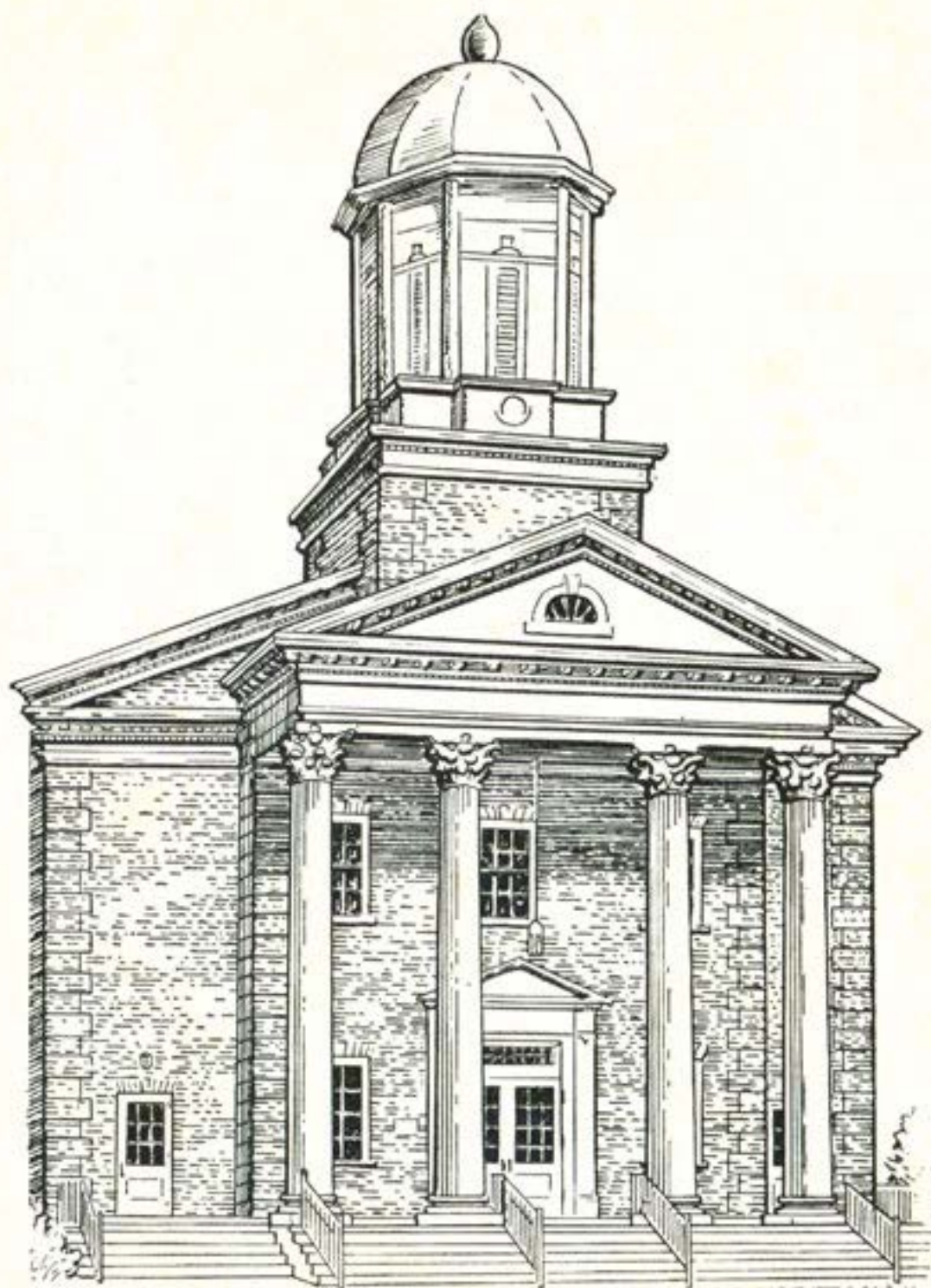
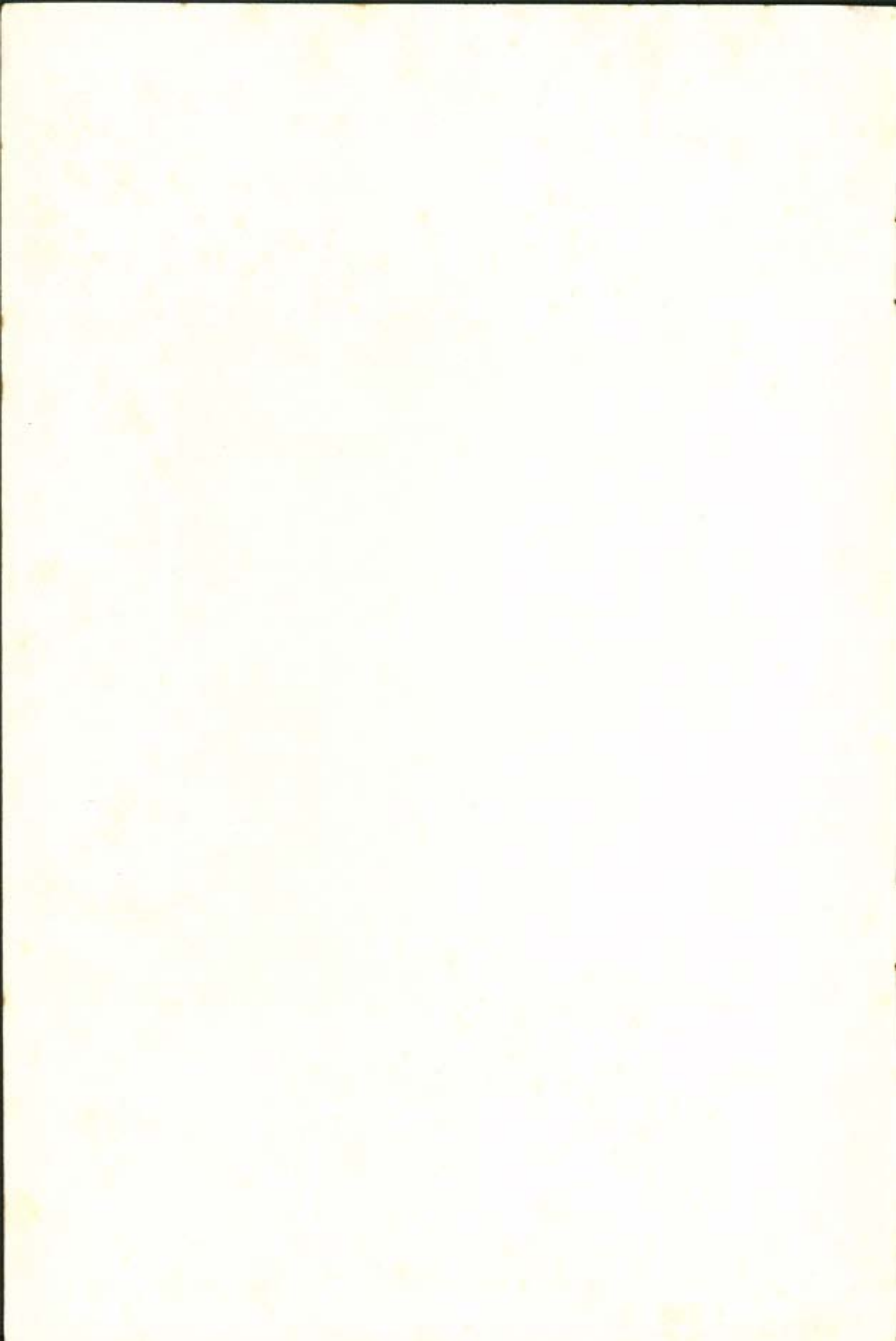




The First Congregational Church

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

1884 - 1959



The
Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the
First Congregational Church
of
Winter Park, Florida
1884 - 1959

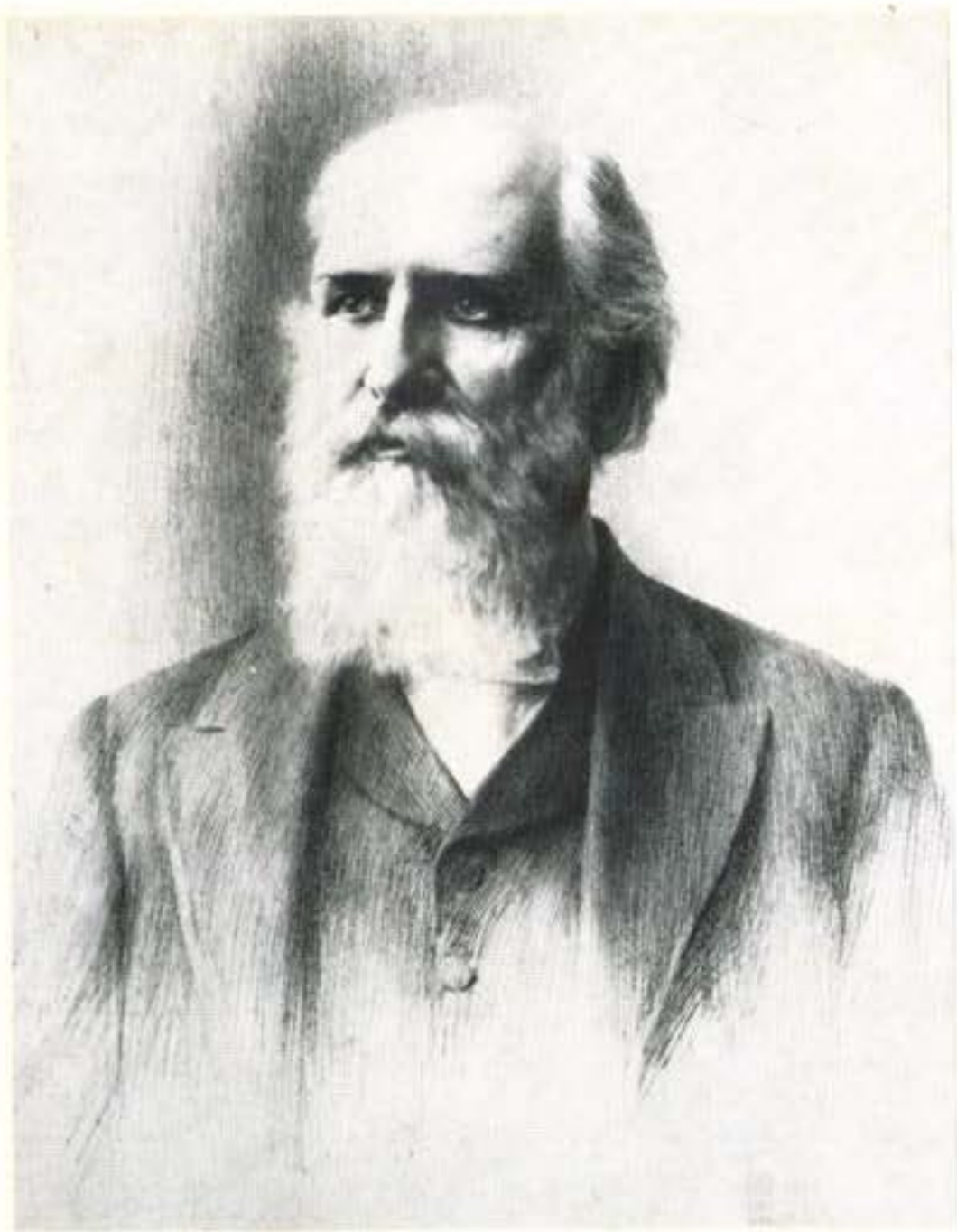
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On Sunday, February 17, 1884, less than three years after the founding of Winter Park, a small group of residents, led by the Rev. E. P. Hooker, met in the Winter Park Town Hall at 10:30 A.M. Then and there, the Congregational Church of Winter Park was organized, and Dr. Hooker conducted the first service. Twelve were present, but later that day, at a service held at 3:00 P.M., the Lord's Supper was celebrated, and fifty-two were present. Two days later, on February 19, 1884, following the custom of early New England churches, a general meeting of the citizens of Winter Park was called to create an organization "to *support* the public worship of God, and to promote Christian knowledge and charity according to the general usages of the Congregational churches and parishes of Florida, and to incorporate according to law." "The Society of Winter Park Congregational Church" came into being as the business and financial arm of the new church.

Winter Park, with a population of less than 600, welcomed its first church organization. The Articles of Faith and Covenant adopted by the charter members of the church closed with these words: "Wherever we may be, we shall seek the honor of God and the good of our fellow men by holy and devoted lives. We covenant with each other to walk together in Christian charity, fellowship and affection. We will submit to the discipline of this church, and watch over each other in a tender and helpful spirit."

* * *

The foregoing was the beginning of our church. There follow, briefly, some of the interesting facts of the history, the growth and the endeavors of those who carried on, always striving to emulate the prayers and hopes of the founders. From them, we have inherited much. To them, in memoriam, we *owe* much as we pause to re-dedicate our church on its Seventy-Fifth Anniversary.



The Rev. Edward Payson Hooker, D.D.

A Tribute

On Sunday, May 26, 1907, the Hooker Memorial House, which provided "a Sunday School room, Prayer Meeting chapel, Missionary and Endeavor home and social center" was dedicated. Thirty-three years later the present Hooker Memorial building of our church was dedicated. These two events, important in the history of our church, honored the memory of a great spiritual leader, organizer, and first pastor of our church. Thus, it is fitting that on the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of our church we again honor the memory of the Rev. Edward Payson Hooker. And, how better can we understand why this honor is deserved than to repeat the words of F. W. Lyman, an early member of our church, who wrote the following tribute to Dr. Hooker for the dedication of the Hooker Memorial House.

"The Hooker Memorial House is today dedicated to God's Service in loving memory of the first pastor of the church, whose life and character left an impress on this community which will not soon be effaced.

"Dr. Hooker had a genius for friendship. There was a personal quality about it which warmed the heart with the assurance that he was indeed your friend. His genial presence . . . instantly prepossessed one in his favor, the first impression being steadily deepened as the character and spirit of the man were more and more revealed.

"In the pulpit, the prayer meeting, the Christian Endeavor Society, the social gathering, at the altar and the grave the spirit was unchanged. Each day was sacred and each place was holy ground for God was there.

"And so he went in and out among us, cheerful, hopeful, never doubting in the darkest days that light would come; always believing that the best was yet to come. Through *all* he walked with God and at last was *not*, for God had taken him."

Blessed with good fortune was our church, and Rollins College (Dr. Hooker also served as the first President of this institution) that he was among us as founder, leader . . . whose influence lived far beyond his service to church, college and community.

The Founders

Prior to the founding of our church (February 17, 1884) a Sunday School, the Winter Park Union S.S. had been organized December 17, 1882. The location: Town Hall, the large upstairs room in the building on Park Avenue opposite the Railway station. In addition to Sunday School services, preaching services were held quite regularly on Sunday afternoons with ministers of different denominations officiating. A January 1884 news item read: "Dr. Hooker preached an eloquent sermon in the Town Hall on the 13 inst. Services are held by him every Sunday at 3:00 P.M." On February 7, 1884 another news item read: "The Congregationalists will organize a church here on Sunday the 17th in the Town Hall." On that date the church was organized by Dr. Hooker and the Rev. S. B. Andrews.

Although the charter members numbered only twelve, there were a larger number of Winter Park residents who played important roles in the founding of both the church and the Society of Winter Park Congregational Church (the finance and business organization) who sooner or later joined the membership roll of the church. Recorded charter members of the church were as follows:

The Rev. E. P. Hooker	Elizabeth R. Hooker	
The Rev. S. B. Andrews	S. H. Bassinger	R. J. D. Larrabee
Elizabeth S. Chapman	Charlotte S. Clark	
Orinda M. Andrews	Lydia S. Larrabee	Nannie Richardson
James Bryant	Eliza A. Bryant	

O. A. Chapman, in whose home a preliminary meeting was held to plan for the organization of the church was soon to become a member. Others who had worked faithfully in the planning of the church and soon joined the membership included Fredrick W. Lyman and Mrs. Lyman, Mary L. McClure, Mrs. Laura J. Guild, Miss Alice E. Guild, Miss Clara L. Guild, E. J. Coan, James Martin, A. W. Rollins, Wm. A. Guild, John R. Mizell, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Ward, Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Chubb and numerous others constituting representation from most of the families and homes of Winter Park at that time.



The Pastors

During its seventy-five years as a prominent, effective and leading force in the spiritual life of Winter Park, our church has been served by eleven pastors. Some served *many* years. Others served a fewer number of years. All served well! In fact, the entire history of the church is a history of growth in membership, religious influence and the facilities for accommodating the widening activities of an *active* church in an actively growing community.

Pastors and their Years of Service

Rev. E. P. Hooker, D.D.	1884-1898
Rev. Charles P. Redfield	1898-1904
Rev. Charles Dewitt Brower	1904-1907
Rev. Fred R. Marsh, D.D.	1907-1908
Rev. Thomas E. Lewis	1908-1911
Rev. Arthur C. Dill, D.D.	1911-1913
Rev. E. C. Enlow	1913-1917
Rev. Clarence A. Vincent, D.D.	1917-1934
Rev. Victor B. Chicoine, D.D.	1934-1945
Rev. Louis Schulz, S.T.D.	1945-1957
Rev. Joseph D. Parkman	1957-

It may be deduced that there is a degree of relationship between the number of years pastors have served and the growth of this church in some phase of its development or service in the community. Thus it may be worthy of note that in the 14 year pastorate of Dr. Hooker, a devoted and expanding congregation built the solid foundations for a church that has endured for three quarters of a century; through devastating times when other less firmly founded churches failed to survive.

Again, in the 17-year pastorate of Dr. Clarence A. Vincent the present beautiful sanctuary replaced the necessarily modest original sanctuary; and in the 11-year pastorate of Dr. Chicoine the present Hooker Memorial Building replaced the original Hooker Memorial Building. Finally, the 12-year pastorate of Dr. Schulz witnessed the greatest growth numerically of our church in its entire history.

We owe much to each and every pastor who has served our church. And, in this anniversary year we rightfully pause to give tribute to those who have passed on; to give thanks and a tribute to those who are still among us. It is a privilege that on this occasion we are honored by the presence of Dr. Victor B. Chicoine, Union Church of Christ, Ludlow, Mass., and Dr. Louis Schulz, pastor of the Community Congregational Church of Fort Myers, Florida.

Historical Highlights

The early residents of Winter Park who founded our church were people with a purpose; eager to get along with the business of building a church physically as well as spiritually. Within a week after the founding of the church (February 17, 1884) the Society of Winter Park Congregational Church was organized. The function of the Society was to *support* the public worship of God. Action on the part of the "Society" was immediate, when at its organization meeting it was voted to do something at once about the building of a church edifice. A committee was appointed to solicit funds. Within a month \$1700 of a desired \$3000 had been secured. Plans for the new church were ready and submitted to the church for approval on April 18, 1884. Members Chapman and Chase gave lots for the building. By June 11, 1885 money and building materials to the extent of \$3412 had been pledged. It was understood by all concerned that in the building of the church no debt was to be incurred "strictly pay as we go."

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Plans for building a parsonage went hand in hand with those for building the church. The church, built as rapidly as money permitted, was completed and dedicated in January, 1886. That fall, the parsonage, constructed at a cost of \$1795.28, was completed and ready for occupancy. The cost of the parsonage was raised through the personal efforts of Mr. Frederick W. Lyman, an important donor himself. Other contributors included F. B. Knowles, Charles H. Morse and Professors W. W. Lloyd and John Ford of the new Rollins College faculty. Both church and parsonage had been built and occupied *free of debt*.

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In some respects the congregation's "Pay as we go plan" was a stern measure. The building fund proved to be a *building fund only!* There was little or nothing left over for furnishing the new little church. Planks resting on nail kegs were the first pews. But as Mr. Lyman stated, "The planks made an uncomfortably strong appeal for more funds that proper seats might be provided." Likewise, the ecclesiastical furnishings were quite austere. Pulpit equipment consisted of a pine table and a kitchen chair. It was not long before generous members provided a pulpit, communion table and appropriate chairs. Walls of rough studding and siding "hardly suitable for a House of the Lord" prompted more generosity to pay for plastering and finishing the walls. Cheese cloth in the windows kept out insects but *not* the cold. Cold weather promptly produced the means

of buying window panes. With the donation of a bell, all excuse for sleeping late, past church time, was removed. As one member put it, "We proudly and thankfully dedicated the most comfortable and attractive church in South Florida, without debt."

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An interesting incident in the early days of the new church was the application of the newly formed Episcopal church (April, 1886) for the use of the Congregational church building for their services. The request was granted, without charge for the use. The only condition was that hours of service were not to conflict. To this permission was added the following: "Trusting that when the Episcopal church shall be favored with an edifice of its own, they will in fraternal love, true Christian charity, and a spirit of cooperation, grant the use thereof to any evangelical church when placed in like circumstance with their own, at present."



One hundred and fifty-one copies of *Laudes Domini* hymn books were given to the church by Mr. Lyman in January, 1889. The following vote of thanks was passed by the Society: "By this act Brother Lyman has placed the Church and Society under great obligation, and we return hearty thanks, and wish that these songs of Zion may comfort him in many an hour . . ."

* * *

After a pastorate of 15 years, Dr. Hooker resigned and part of his resignation statement read: "After fifteen years I find myself very much worn. It has been a rare privilege to aid in founding the church and the college, now in prospering usefulness. My prayers will attend you in the larger growth of these, which I am sure with the blessing of God will follow."

Early in 1914 our church was incorporated as the First Congregational Church of Winter Park. The trustees transferred all property and obligations from the "Society" to the church, and application was made to the Circuit Court for dissolution of the Society of Winter Park Congregational Church. Thus the church, and its auxiliary for business and finance, became ONE.



Dr. Clarence A. Vincent, called to the pastorate in September, 1917, served the church for seventeen years, the longest pastorate in the history of the church. They were fruitful years. Church receipts had risen sharply from \$1948.30 in 1914 to \$4501 in 1919. The revised church roll showed 120 members. Of these, there were 10 Stones, 8 Vincents, 11 Wards, 4 Enlows, 5 Campbells, 3 Blackmans and 2 Shepherds in the flock. It was during this time that Pastor Vincent suggested that consideration be given to the building of a new edifice. It was felt that because of the growth of Winter Park there was a need for a church of greater capacity . . . and more modern, too. By May 1922, \$22,500 had been pledged for the new sanctuary. By the time the cornerstone of the new building had been laid (November, 1923) the building fund had reached \$34,275 and the Congregational Church Building Society granted a loan of \$5000. The first sermon delivered in the new sanctuary was on January 18, 1925. Dedication services were held on March 14, 1926. They had been deferred until such time as the new building was fully paid for. Membership of the church had risen to 174 and the Sunday School had a membership of 205.

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With the resignation of Dr. Vincent in 1934, Dr. Victor B. Chicoine became pastor. The ten years that followed marked another fruitful decade in the history of our church. The original Hooker Memorial House gave way to the present Hooker Memorial Hall, providing greatly enlarged facilities for the Sunday School and the

many other activities of the church and community. Also, it was during this period that Rollins College acquired the original church parsonage, and by an exchange, the property upon which the present parsonage was then erected, was acquired.

On September 2, 1945 Dr. Louis Schulz, who succeeded Dr. Chicoine, delivered his first sermon. It was the beginning of a long, active and productive pastorate that extended to the fall of 1957. During these years more than 675 were received into membership. Sunday School enrollment totalled 250 and high attendance was the rule under the stimulus of 30 dedicated teachers and 6 officers. The Women's Fellowship experienced a large expansion of activities—350 members belonging to 12 "circles" . . . all doing good works in behalf of Home and World Wide Missions. Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowship groups and the Winter Park Boy Scout Troop #39 and Cub Pack #39 (both sponsored by the church) contributed to wide activity by young people in the church.

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Upon the resignation of Dr. Schulz in 1957, the congregation called the Rev. Joseph D. Parkman to the pastorate. And today, as new history is in the making for the First Congregational Church of Winter Park, there is a sincere and fervent wish that it will be made during a long and mutually beneficial relationship between church and pastor, under the leadership of Mr. Parkman. The recent dedication of the new Administration Building, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. Zerbey, is an appropriate milestone in this the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Year of our church.



Our Church Today

Today, as in the past, our church is a "living, working church." It is a friendly, warm-hearted place where people from many backgrounds and areas come together to worship God. In our two services of worship on Sunday mornings, active members join together from two counties and a dozen communities, made possible by an ease of travel never dreamed of by our founding fathers.

Today we have twelve Circles which make up the Women's Fellowship, open to all women of the church. In addition, we have the Dorcas Society, the Needlewomen's group and the Prayer group.

Today there is an active program for the youth of all ages: Church School, Senior and Junior Pilgrim Fellowships, Kindergarten, Nursery, and Scout groups. In addition, the Music department of our church under the leadership of the Minister of Music, Edna Wallace Johnston, offers the opportunity for all ages to participate, beginning with the choir for very small children, through various levels, to the adult choir (Chancel) is one of the finest in all of central Florida and presents some of the outstanding musical events of the church year. All choirs participate regularly in our church services in creating an atmosphere of worship.

Our adult activities include an adult Bible class which meets on Sunday mornings, a Discussion group meeting once a month on Sunday evenings, and the Congregator group which serves coffee between services on Sunday mornings to the congregation and promotes recreational programs for the young adults, including a Family Night supper once a month.

Our church and the Women's Fellowship together contribute to the support of the Rev. Eleanor Wilson, missionary in the Micronesian group of islands in the Pacific.

Today, as in the past, with a growing Benevolence program, our church is a leader in supporting the programs of our denomination, both in Florida and the nation, contributing the services of members as well as gifts.

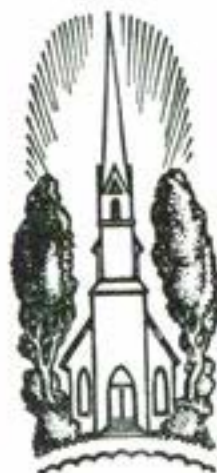
While we share together our devotion in overflowing numbers in our worship services, we also share the spirit of fellowship in our regular monthly All-Church Night dinners, in the activity of our boards and committees, and in our special programs. Ours is a church of spiritual concern and thoughtful fellowship.

Our Church Tomorrow

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." (1 Cor. 3:11). Today we are creating the spiritual and mental atmosphere and groundwork for tomorrow. "Without vision men perish." But this is a church of vision for we are praying, working and building together as we look forward to the further establishment of God's kingdom in our community and beyond. We look forward to the future when with other Congregational Christian Churches in our area we shall be strengthening the bonds of Christian union with our fellowmen around the world.

Twenty-five years, as we measure time, are not many, yet we are in a period of great expansion, coming with explosive force. Will we meet the needs of future generations as did our founding fathers? Will our church be enlarged, strengthened, beautified, equipped and modernized? Will we meet the great demands of evangelism and missionary enterprise? Will we educate and equip our children and youth to meet the challenges of an unknown future?

What will our church be like twenty-five years hence, when we celebrate our One Hundreth Anniversary? That will depend on our devotion and love for God and our church in the intervening years. As we now look back to our founding fathers, the people twenty-five years from now will be looking back to *us* as to how we met today's spiritual challenge and need, attention to duty and obligations.



With A Hymn We Praise

Praise we the wise and brave and strong,
Who graced their generation;
Who helped the right and fought the wrong,
And made our folk a nation.

Praise we the great of heart and mind,
The singers sweetly gifted,
Whose music like a mighty wind
The souls of men uplifted.

Praise we the peaceful men of skill
Who builded homes of beauty,
And rich in art, made richer still
The brotherhood of duty.

So praise we great and famous men,
The fathers named in story;
And praise the Lord who now and then
Reveals in man His glory.

* * *

With A Psalm We Re-dedicate

Open to me the gates of righteousness:

I will go unto them, and I will praise the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous will enter.

I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my
salvation.

The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the
corner.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day which the Lord hath made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

From Psalm 118: 19-24

